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UNCLAS HELSINKI 000297

SIPDIS

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CEQ FOR CONNAUGHTON/HANNEGAN
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TAGS: [ECON](#) [SENV](#) [ENRG](#) [EU](#) [PREL](#) [FI](#)

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION DURING FINLAND'S EU
PRESIDENCY

[11.](#) (SBU) On April 4, Ambassador Ware met with Finland's Minister of Environment Jan-Erik Enestam. Minister Enestam reiterated his high regard for the transatlantic relationship and said that he had invited OES A/S Claudia McMurray to visit Finland in advance of Finland's EU presidency, which begins in June 2006. He confirmed that climate change would be a top priority for the Finnish presidency, particularly in terms of reaching out to non-Kyoto countries, including the U.S., China and India. He underlined the importance of a broad approach to climate change that addresses production and consumption issues.

[12.](#) (SBU) He was quick, however, to point to "Finnish pragmatism" and readiness to look for common ground with the U.S. outside of a Kyoto or Kyoto-like agreement. He recognized the importance of research cooperation (such as the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment) and the development of new technology. He was particularly keen to find a mutual approach to India and China energy questions. "They need to be brought to a sustainable energy future," he said, stressing the need for China to move away from coal-powered energy. Of particular value, he suggested, would be cooperation on energy efficiency. He explained that Finland would be hosting an energy efficiency conference on September 11-12 called "Audit 06," where they intend to launch a global development program (World Audit Program) that seeks to eliminate energy wastage, particularly in India and China, through a forum allowing for exchange of best practices. He welcomed U.S. participation (and speakers) in this conference.

[13.](#) (SBU) Comment. In light of Finland's expressed (non-politicized) willingness to find common ground on climate issues, Finland's EU presidency may be a valuable opportunity to steer the EU climate discussion in a direction more compatible with U.S. priorities. We strongly encourage U.S. participation in Audit 06, and feel that it would introduce a strong and practical energy component to the transatlantic climate dialogue. Perhaps a U.S.-EU energy dialogue meeting immediately before or after the conference could pay dividends. End comment.

WARE